

The National Environmental Policy Act (Also known as NEPA)

What is it and why do we have to do it?

NEPA is a procedural statute (40 CFR sec 1500) for decision-making during federal projects which assures proper analysis of social, economic and environmental impacts are performed.

This project is federally funded through the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and as such is subject to federal regulation. The Idaho Transportation Department is required to prepare a “NEPA” document for the FHWA.

The NEPA document will study a reasonable range of alternatives based on the Purpose and Need, consider appropriate mitigation for impacts, include interagency coordination and consultation, and provide the public opportunity to participate in the process and comment on the project.

At the end of the process the studies, agency coordination, public participation and comments are wrapped up into a document called an Environmental Assessment (EA) or an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The document is approved by the FHWA and a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) or a Record of Decision (ROD) is given by the FHWA to complete the process.

A conceptual flow chart is provided to illustrate the process.